GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:312
ANSWERED ON:14.08.2000
FREE TELEPHONE TO STAFF
SHRINIWAS DADASAHEB PATIL;THAAWAR CHAND GEHLOT

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether this ministry propose to provide free telephone facilities to all its Postal and Telecom employees throughout the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the details of the guidelines framed for this purpose;

(c) the estimated number of telephone connections to be provided under this scheme and expenditure likely to be incurred by the Government on this account every year;

(d) whether the objections raised by the Ministry of Finance have been cleared by the Government and finally approved has been;

(e) whether similar free telephone facility would be provided to employees of other Government departments also;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor;
(g) whether the said decision has been challenged in Kerala High Court and Supreme Court;
(h) if so, the details thereof; and
(i) the details of steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent misuse of free telephone facility?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)
(a) to (i): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT IN RESPECT OF PARTS (a) to
(i) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 312 FOR 14TH AUGUST, 2000 REGARDING FREE TELEPHONE TO STAFF

It has been decided to provide certain concessional telephone facilities to the telecom employees wishing to take private telephone connections.
This operational decision has been taken in the wake of increased competitive environment which has emerged in the telecom sector. The decision is meant to motivate the employees and increase their availability for betterment of the public utility service. Concessions, such as waiver of
(i) registration charges,
(ii) installation charges and
(iii) bi-monthly rental (at the present level), would be extended to the telecom employees who wish to take private connections. The employees will have to pay applicable call charges for the calls made by them like any normal subscriber. Those employees, who have been provided service telephone connection, will not be entitled to seek these concessions.
About 3 lakh employees of the Department are expected to be covered under this scheme. Estimated financial implications involved are a recurring expenditure between Rs.78.3 Crore (for low calling) to Rs.99.9 Crore (for high calling) per annum and a non-recurring expenditure of about Rs.24 Crore.
Telecom Commission has full executive and financial powers to decide the matters relating to the affairs of telecom services. Decisions to grant concessions to the employees are based on the overall administrative and operational requirement of the respective Departments only. The question of extending similar facility to employees of other Departments is outside the purview of Telecom Commission.
Four Original Petitions along-with Civil Miscellaneous Petitions, have been filed in the High Court of the Kerala by individuals and a registered organization against the decision of the Department and a stay has also been granted by the Hon`ble High Court.Common Cause, a Registered Society, has filed Civil Writ Petition in the Supreme Court.The matter is presently sub-judice and no formal orders have been issued so far.
The concessions would be admissible on private telephones only for which applicable call charges will have to be paid by the employees like any normal subscriber. Hence, no misuse of the telephone facility is anticipated.